

[ Eye to Eye ]

by Brenda Fishbaugh



Tanning industry veteran Brenda Fishbaugh is president of Eye Pro, Inc., makers of disposable eyewear. She travels extensively training salons on the effects of UV light on vision.



# Earth, Eyes!

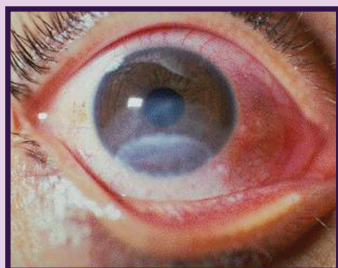
**D**id you know that the earth's ozone layer is what keeps us from burning up? There's a hole in the ozone layer, and if it continues to grow, the sun's ultraviolet radiation (UVR) that reaches Earth will become less and less filtered. If that happens, it will change the way plants function and reproduce. Plant-eating animals will run out of things to eat. And if plant-eating animals can't find food, they'll die – leaving us with less and less to eat.

At the same time that our food sources begin to die off, the number of cases of cataracts that lead to blindness will increase dramatically. Without the ozone layer, our living planet will eventually die – we simply can't live without its protection from the sun's powerful UV rays.

The point here isn't to preach about how terrible it is that the ozone layer is being destroyed; what we want you to know about are the many ways you can be overexposed to UVR, the risks to your eyesight associated with UVR, and how best to protect your eyes.

When your eyes are sunburned, it's called **photokeratitis**. (Yes, you can actually sunburn your eyeballs!) Photokeratitis is a big word that means you've burned the cornea, or the outermost layer of your eyeball. Though the pain associated with a corneal burn is thought by some to feel like sand or dirt in the eye, it's actually the cornea peeling! Other symptoms include:

- Watery eyes
- Inflammation of the eyeball's surface
- Moderate to severe pain
- Blurred or cloudy vision
- Light sensitivity
- Reddening of the eye
- Twitching around the eye
- Reduced pupil size



Although there isn't much you alone can do to protect the ozone layer, there's plenty you can do to protect your eyes from corneal burns. Because corneal burns are the No. 1 reason indoor tanners visit emergency rooms after tanning, it makes good sense to wear eye protection every time you tan. Do you know that each year 12,000 people are sent to the emergency room with eye burns from unprotected tanning sessions? The FDA tracks this and it's a sad number, as people come to salons to feel and look better. Instead, they wind up needing medical attention!

Make it a habit to protect your eyes indoors, educate your tanners, and take the same philosophy outdoors. A corneal burn happens in a single tanning session, with your eyes closed! Make sure you always wear FDA compliant eye protection! ■

**UV Light Causes This:**

- Night Vision Loss
- Color Vision Loss
- Photokeratitis
- Cataracts

**Dirty Goggles Cause This:**

- Molluscum Contagiosum
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Staph Mepharitis
- Herpes Simplex

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*Eye Pro's educational counter-mat is a valuable tool for informing your tanners about the dangers of tanning with unprotected eyes.*

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